Salmon Creek Basin Plan Public Meeting
March 11, 2004
Shorewood Elementary School

Public – 15 participants
Basin plan project team – 6 participants

Meeting Questions/Discussion Items/Comments from the Public

Comment: It was suggested that the project team should have used a direct mailing to citizens in the area to inform them about the public meeting, in order to increase public participation.

Response: The project team did discuss the possibility of using a direct mailing to advertise the 2nd round of public meetings, but decided to use mailing lists of prior participants, the web site, local newspapers, City of Burien TV, and local citizen group contacts (e.g., Shorewood Community Club) in lieu of direct mailing. Direct mailing is time intensive and expensive, and local government experience using direct mailing for similar efforts has also found it to be a relatively ineffective means of getting participation.

Question: In discussing potential ESA impacts on Salmon Creek, the information focused on fish species. One participant asked if there was any known use of the Salmon basin by western pond turtles – or any other ESA species (non-fish).

Response: The project team is not aware of any non-fish ESA species using the Salmon Creek Basin. The project manager will ask project scientists to explore this possibility further.

Comment: In discussing historical "uses" in the basin, one participant noted that there had been a water supply use pre-World War II, based on his research of the basin history (JC Burke apparently supplied water to local residents from Salmon Creek).

Response: The participant was thanked for sharing this information.

Comment: One participant asked if staff from Fish and Wildlife were involved in the basin plan, or in reviewing the estimates of fish productivity that had been done.

Response: Ecology staff met with the project team last month, and they brought up this very question. Project scientists have been asked to contact Fish and Wildlife staff to get their review and input of the fish productivity estimates for these basins.

Comment: In the projects presented, habitat projects are only shown in the lower basin. Habitat projects should not be ignored in the upper watershed.

Response: The project team discussed habitat projects in the upper basin, but none were included on the map presented at the meeting. The project team will refine the map to address this oversight. Note that water quality projects in the upper basin will provide improvements in habitat in the upper basin as well.

Question: What was the % increase in base flow in Salmon Creek following the Nisqually earthquake?

Response: The information wasn't available at the meeting; however, a review of the monitoring data for the basin indicates that Salmon Creek itself has not shown any appreciable increase in flow since the earthquake. One tributary to Salmon Creek, which experienced a landslide during the earthquake, may have some increased surface flow, although we can't be sure because we don't have monitoring equipment at that location. It might seem counterintuitive that a tributary's surface flow could increase while Salmon Creek's flow remains the same. It could be possible, however, if the landslide changed some local groundwater routing such that what was groundwater flow into Salmon Creek became surface water flow, through the increased flow in the tributary. The net amount of water reaching Salmon Creek would be the same, but more of the water in the tributary would be surface water.

Discussion: In looking at the "red parcel map" and discussing its origins, some participants were concerned that it underestimated the likely redevelopment of the basin. One participant asked whether in fact the whole basin should be "red" and asked whether the jurisdictions should put a moratorium on development in order to protect the basin from further degradation. There was specific concern about how the development of Greenbridge (the new King County Housing Authority development) would impact the downstream basin in terms of flows and water quality.

Response: The project manager summarized the mathematical exercise that was used to identify the red parcels; namely, that red parcels were identified as those parcels in which the improvement value was less than the land value. The parcels were further screened to eliminate any parks, cemeteries, or other permanent open space areas. Consideration was given to simply assuming that the basin would be fully developed under existing zoning. Given the age of much of the development in the basin (40 or more years), however, this potential did not seem very likely during the 20-year planning horizon for the basin plan.

King County staff have been involved in reviewing the storm water quantity and quality proposals related to the Greenbridge development. The detention and water quality controls that are being planned go beyond anything currently in place or currently required for flow control and water quality. Project staff will summarize what is known about what is being planned for this project, and post it on the web site.

Question: What is the percentage of the basin area that flows to the by-pass versus that which flows to the creek?

Response: A description of which sub-basins discharge to the by-pass line was given at the meeting. Modeling data indicate that approximately 74% of the basin area and 75% of the total basin flow is diverted to the by-pass line.

Question: What is the current land cover breakdown of the basin?

Response: This information was not available at the public meeting; however, a review of the modeling information indicates that 69% of the basin has till soils, 29% has outwash soils, and 2% is wetlands. These soils have been developed over the decades and currently about 17% of the basin is covered with impervious surfaces. Those impervious surfaces include 235 acres of low-intensity development (those parcels with approximately 4 percent impervious surface), 608 acres of medium-intensity development (those parcels with approximately 15 percent impervious surface), 54 acres of high-intensity development (those parcels with approximately 47 percent impervious surface), and 107 acres of asphalt and concrete.

Comment: In terms of the data presented, some participants would have liked the information to have been handled separately for the upper and lower basins. Other participants wanted the information kept together.

Response: The upper watershed drainage goes to the bypass line. The bypass line parallels the creek, and only under extreme flow conditions overflows to it. These two systems are separate in terms of their outflow to the Sound, but they are related. The scope of the basin plan is the entire basin, and includes the upper and lower basins and all the individual sub-basins.

Comment: When Park Lake Homes was built, apparently several thousand cubic yards of asphalt and concrete were dumped at the end of Lake Hicks. This material is now working its way to the surface of the lake. This information is offered as an example of county agencies not working well together and doing things that are inconsistent with other programs (such as the basin plan). When this was done, members of the public confronted Parks staff about this dumping. Citizens were told that permits were not required because less than 100 yards was being placed adjacent to Lake Hicks. Citizens felt that in fact probably 1000 yards of materials were put there by Parks.

Response: The project manager had not been aware of this and thanked the citizen for this information.

Comment: Stewardship efforts cannot be successful unless training and resources are provided.

Response: Agreed. The basin steward proposed for this basin as part of the basin plan would help to provide the necessary training and resources.

Comment: Questions were posed about relative project priorities, and the goals for the basin. Several citizens felt that the questions being asked were inappropriate and not stated adequately. One citizen suggested that we should be asking “How do we insist on the political will to make the improvements to restore the stream to its prior condition?”

Response: The questions posed to the citizens were asked of the project team, in one form or another, by city managers and others. The city managers want to hear what priorities and goals the citizens feel strongly about, and how much they are willing to pay in order to achieve the goals. In terms of forcing the political will to take on this burden, it will be up to the citizens to provide feedback to their local jurisdictions, elected officials, etc. The project manager reiterated that the basin plan document will provide analysis, technical recommendations, and prioritized projects, but that implementation of these projects will happen through the local jurisdictions individually or together, with these projects competing for funding with other projects and programs.

Comment: In terms of stewardship and citizen involvement, there are habitat restoration projects already happening in the upper watershed by White Center Pond. Students are being used to do monitoring and planting. This program could be used as a model for other efforts in the basin.

Response: Agreed. The project team appreciates the on-going efforts and looks forward to seeing them expanded in the future.

Comment: Several citizens suggested having a greater citizen involvement in the basin planning project (similar to the unincorporated area councils). They were concerned that their particular interests in the basin might not be met otherwise.

Response: The project team understands the need for on-going and effective public involvement and commits to continuing to include the public in the development and review of the basin plan.